

Christmas Fun

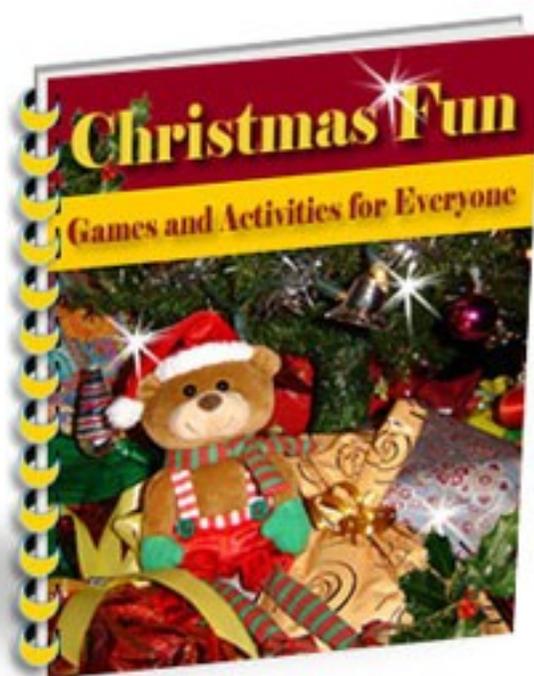


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Games for the Christmas Holiday

When you have a lot of people over for Christmas Dinner you'll want to plan some fun activities they can do while dinner is cooking. While some guests of course may prefer to watch games on TV while dinner is cooking, there will be some who will prefer other activities for fun. Here's some fun table games your guest can play while waiting for dinner.

Board Games

Board games have always been popular through out the years, so be sure to have some on hand. For the kids you'll want something like chutes and ladders, candyland, monopoly, yahtzee, game of life, wheel of fortune, or scrabble to name a few.

Tablecloth Coloring

Another fun activity for the little ones is to get a tablecloth that they can color on and decorate. This should be one of those disposable types of tablecloths of course, as you don't want to ruin your good stuff. Have them date it and put their name on it as this will give you something to look back on and remember fond memories when they are all grown up.

Outdoor Games

If the weather permits, perhaps some outdoor games would be a good way to pass the time until dinner is ready. They could play a game of Frisbee, soccer ball, football, horseshoes, or even a simple little croquet game would be fun!

Sharing stories

For example you could have everyone share their stories about the best or worst presents they ever got! They would have to describe the gift and describe why they thought it was the best or worst gift they ever got.

Guess that food dish

Let those who aren't helping prepare the dinner try to guess what dishes are going to be served by smelling them with their eyes closed. The easy stuff like ham, turkey, roast etc doesn't count, as those are easy but how about some of those side dishes! For instance can they tell squash from sweet potatoes, Brussels sprouts from cauliflower etc. Let the winner have a taste of the dish of their choice!

Puppet Show

Puppet show - Put on a puppet show acting out some Christmas Stories can be another great way to entertain the little ones and help pass the time as well! If you can video tape the puppet show it will make for great entertainment and wonderful memories in years to come as well.

Homemade Tree Decorations Can Be Fun

These days it seems like the holidays make us feel so stressed, with all the activities of shopping, dinner planning, parties, school plays and driving the kids around, but there is something fun you can do and save money in the process...make your own Christmas Tree decorations!

This can be a fun project that can involve the whole family! It really won't be that expensive and allows you to be creative and maybe even start a new family tradition that will be enjoyed for years to come!

One of the things you can do is take some plain colored glass balls and use some spray-on glue to sprinkle on some glitter, jewels, buttons, or sequins. These supplies are readily available at craft supply stores. While you're there you should pick up some ribbon, stickers, felt, yarn, and fabric scraps as well so you can have plenty of different options for decorating with.

Materials

The material such as felt, fabric scraps or ribbons could be used to cut out special shapes such as hearts or stars and then glue them on to the glass balls. You can also cut out some Christmas pictures from magazines or old Christmas Cards and use them to make some beautiful ornaments.

Being Creative

You can also use food to make ornaments. I'm sure you're all familiar with the popcorn string, which is always a big hit! You can also make cookies such as the Gingerbread man or other dough type of cookies. You can decorate them with frosting or a variety of sprinkles! You'll want to be sure to make a hole at the top so you can run a string thru it. Another good thing to do is to shrink wrap it with saran wrap. You can help make the plastic wrap conform to the cookie

shape by heating it with a blow dryer! This way you can preserve the cookies so they could be eaten later!

You can even find ornament-decorating kits at crafts stores that allow you to cutout shapes, and then paint or color them. You can also make decorations with ordinary construction paper, some glue and glitter, crayons or paints! You should have everyone put their name on whatever they create, as it will make for wonderful memories in years to come.

There are other things you may find lying around the house that you can use as well. These could be things like old small toys that you can tie a string to and hang on the tree, or you may have some old jewelry, marbles, or maybe some colorful rocks.

Get the family together and toss around some decorating ideas and you may be surprised and delighted with what you come up with!

Christmas Eve Family Fun

Most people may not think of Christmas Eve as a time for games, but it can actually be fun especially if you have children anxiously awaiting for the big day!

Gift Hunt

A lot of people will let the kids open one present on Christmas eve, however you can make this little event last longer and be more fun for them by making them hunt for the gifts rather than having them under the tree. You'll provide them with clues as to where they will find their gift and they will need to follow the clues to find it.

The paper the clues are on can be as simple as folder paper or it can be leftover Christmas cards. You'll want to spread the clues around the house with each one leading them to the next clue. You'll probably want to have about 5 clues and depending on the age of the children you may need to help them a bit if they can't read yet.

Musical Chairs

It could be a good idea to get a little exercise the night before the big feast day, so perhaps a game of musical chairs would be in order? Some fun upbeat music would be the best choice for this to keep everyone in a lively fun mood. A good way to add another element of fun to this game is to pick songs that everyone knows the words to, and have them sing along while the music is playing.

Who is Santa

If you have little ones anxiously waiting for Santa you may want to play a game of 'who is Santa'. To play the game have everyone gather around in a circle

then choose someone to be Rudolph and have them leave the room briefly. While Rudolph is gone, those remaining will pick someone to be Santa and Rudolph must find out who it is. The person that was chosen to be Santa will wink at others in the circle and if you get winked at, you will say 'ho ho ho'. After Rudolph has identified 'Santa' another person becomes Rudolph and the game can continue on.

Christmas Games for the Little Ones

Coming up with games for the little ones is a pretty easy task as they are usually game for just about anything!

Relay Races

Relay races are always a good choice as kids love to run. Since it's the holiday season this race will involve the use of candy canes. Divide up into teams and provide each team with 4 candy canes. Tell them they will need to hold the 4 candy canes between their fingers with the hook part hanging over the finger but they can't use their thumbs.

Next the children will run to their teammate, who will then take the candy canes, but they can only use their fingers and the other teammate must hold them the same way. That teammate will then run to the other end and will do the same with another teammate. The game will end when one team still holding candy canes between their fingers and have not dropped any.

Another simple relay game that can be fun is to have them pass some item related to Christmas from one teammate to the other. It could be a Christmas stocking, hat, or an unbreakable ornament just to give you a few ideas.

The Freeze Dance

Young ones have always loved the 'freeze dance', and is similar to musical chairs except they don't sit down. You'll want to use some Christmas music to keep with the holiday spirit, and when you stop the music they must 'freeze in place' instantly. This is a great way to help the little ones burn off some energy and have fun at the same time.

Toss Games

Toss games are also another fun favorite of the little ones. You can make a figure to toss at with some cardboard and decorate it to look like Santa or a snowman and cut a hole in the middle to throw something thru. You'll also want to secure it in some way so it won't fall over easily. If you have real snow available let them make real snowballs to toss thru the hole.

If real snow isn't an option you could use plastic balls or foam balls. If using something lightweight like foam or plastic you'll want to arrange it so they don't have to throw it very far as those type of items won't travel very far. The winner will be the first one to make 3 successful tosses thru the hole!

Fun Christmas Games for Adults

While we usually tend to focus on games to keep the kiddies entertained, adults can have their games too!

Santa Beard

Adults may find this game fun if they don't mind getting a bit gooey for a short time! Divide up into 2 teams and get some Vaseline and a bowl of cotton ball for each team. Each team member will put some Vaseline on their chins, and then each team member will run up and dip their chins in the bowl of cotton balls and run back so the next member can have a turn. You'll want to get as many cotton balls to stick to your chin as possible. The first team to have all members with a beard wins the game!

You should be sure and get some pictures and it will make for good laughs in holidays to come! Of course you'll also want to have some towels and warm water to remove the Vaseline.

Scavenger Hunt

A scavenger hunt was always a fun game as a kid, but just because you're an adult doesn't mean you can't still have one! This scavenger hunt will be for items all related to Christmas since it is that time of year. Divide up into teams of 4 will work best, then give them the list of items they need to gather.

You can contain the search to items that can be found in your home or you can make it even more fun and let them run all over town trying to find the items on the list. You should be creative when coming up with the items and include things such as a picture at a particular location, or a certain type of Christmas box. It's a great way for everyone to work together and have some fun in the process!

Packing Santa's Bag

If you want to have a more quiet game, you may want to play 'packing Santa's bag' game. For this game you'll need some items to pack and a pillowcase or other type of bag to put the items in. The first person will start the game by saying "I packed Santa's bag and I put socks in it", they'll place the socks in the bag and pass it to the next person. The next person will say "I packed Santa's bag and I put socks and t-shirts in it, and they will then place their item in the bag.

So as you can see each person will have to repeat what the others put in it as well as what they put in it. The first person that misses listing an item will be out of the game, so as the bag gets passed around more and more, the remaining players will drop out until one is left standing and be declared the winner.

Fun Christmas Games for ages 5-11

If you need to entertain a group of young children in the elementary school age group, you can find a wide variety of fun games for them to play.

Fill the Stocking

One game you can play is called 'fill the stocking'. You'll want to create teams that consist of at least 3-6 kids. Each team will have a stocking hung on a wall. Next you'll need a bowl of candy plus some spoons. The object of the game is for the kids to place the spoon in their mouth (handle first) and then scoop up some candy from the candy bowl. They must keep the spoon in their mouth then run or walk to the stocking hanging on the wall and put the candy in it. They then go to the back of the line and next child up does the same thing. You'll want to have enough spoons for each child to have their own. The game ends when the bowl of candy is empty. The team who gets the most candy in their stocking wins a big bag of candy.

The Remember This Game

If the kids have been active for a while you may want to play a sit-down game. One favorite game is called 'remember this'. To play the game, get a large cookie sheet and cover it with about 20 Christmas related items. These items can be candy canes, ornaments, ribbons etc. Next you'll give each child approx 30 seconds to look at all the items on the cookie sheet, then cover it and move it out of their sight. Now give the kids about 30 seconds to recall everything that was on the cookie sheet. You'll want them to write it all down. Whoever recalls the most items will be declared the winner!

Draw What I Say

Another good sit-down game involves using a pencil and some paper. You'll then tell the kids to close their eyes and draw what you say. You won't tell them

exactly what the drawing will be but you will have them draw shapes. First have them draw 3 circles with a big one on bottom and small one on top. Next you'll have them draw the dots for the eyes, some buttons for a coat, a hat and so on until you have provided them with a complete description of a snowman. Now have them all open their eyes and see how close their drawing got to the real thing! The one who produces the drawing that looks the most like a snowman wins the prize!

Have Some Holiday Fun With a Tree Trimming Party

The holiday season is always a busy time for everyone with all the shopping, baking, parties, gift wrapping, Christmas plays etc, that it can be hard to find time to spend with friends. One way to spend time with friends and tackle the task of getting your tree decorated as well, is to have a 'tree trimming party'.

It's usually best to have these tree trimming parties in the evenings or late afternoons if possible. When sending out the invitations be sure to tell your guest what you will be serving so they can plan what they may want to eat before they come.

Food for the Party

No holiday would be complete without sweets, so you're bound to want to have some cookies, pies, cakes or other goodies on hand to serve your guests. You'll also want to plan on having some appetizers and hot drinks such as hot chocolate, apple cider, tea and also some Eggnog and juice will do nicely.

If you're holding the event about mid-morning you may want include some brunch items such as muffins, bagels, sliced fruit and maybe a breakfast type quiche made with sausage, ham or bacon and eggs. Ymmm makes my mouth water just thinking about it! If you're having an afternoon event you may want to have some sandwiches, stew or chili to serve.

Now that we've covered the food items, on to the tree itself! You'll want to have the tree already in place, standing up straight with a skirt around it. Have some Christmas music laid out to play and if you have a fireplace light a fire. Candles also make for nice lighting with and provide a sense of warmth as well.

The Ornaments

Next comes the ornaments, you may choose to provide guests with ornaments to hang or perhaps some material to create their own! Maybe a little bit of both! If your guests are going to making some ornaments be sure to have them sign and date their creations and have enough material on hand that they can make one for themselves to take home.

If your guest lists is going to include kids be sure to have some age appropriates supplies and refreshments on hand for them. One favorite activity is to make popcorn or cranberry strings! People of all ages will enjoy your little tree trimming party and you'll have a beautifully decorated tree when it's all over with!

Gift Exchange Games for the Family

At one time a family gift exchange meant everyone bought gifts for everyone else and they all exchanged gifts with one another when the family got together.

However many families find it gets quite costly to try and buy for everyone as the family continues to grow, so these days more and more people will have a drawing where everyone picks someone's name and they buy a gift for that person. While this method is practical it's not quite as much fun so we need to find ways to make the gift exchanging more entertaining.

Hunt For The Gift

One of the ways you can do make gift exchanges more fun is to hide the gift and then give the recipient clues on how to find the gift. You can design these clues to be rather silly or serious. You may want to make it easy for them to find the gift quickly or you may want to draw it out more by making it a bit more difficult to find. The method you choose may depend on whom the gift is for as that can make a difference.

White Elephant Gift Exchange

Another gift exchange method that's common today is the white elephant gift exchange, where the gift should be something that can be suitable for just about anyone. To make it more fun you may want go with a themed 'white elephant' gift exchange. For instance if the family was into hiking all the gifts would be something related to hiking. Think about the things your family enjoys to help you come up with creative themes.

Since these 'white elephant' gifts are not attached to any names you need a fun way to determine how they select the gift they get. One way is to have

everyone draw a number and then they get to pick their gift from the gift pile based on the number they ended up with. You can also allow people to steal someone else's gift if they prefer rather than picking from the pile.

Another fun process is to have the gift recipient to shake the gift a bit, examine it and try to guess what it contains before they can open it. If their guess is correct, they can 'take' someone else's gift, but if they guessed wrong they have to keep it.

Keep in mind the whole idea of a gift exchange is to have fun and enjoying the company of family and friends, and not make the primary focus on the gifts themselves.

Classroom Gift Exchange Games

These days a lot of schools don't do gift exchanges for the Christmas season, but there are still some that do. Adding some fun games to the gift exchange can make it more interesting and festive for them.

With a children's gift exchange it's best to set the spending limit for the gifts at \$5. But it isn't the cost of the gift that makes it fun, it's the activities surrounding the gift exchange.

One gift exchange method is the most common one which is called the "white elephant". There are various ways to do it, but for this one we'll use the numbers drawing. Write down enough numbers to cover the number of gifts added to the pile. Then each child will draw a number and get to pick a gift from the pile or they can 'steal' one that someone else already has. However a gift is only allowed to be stolen 3 times. Children always seem to get a kick out of 'stealing' someone else's gift;)

Mystery Santa

Another fun gift exchange is the 'mystery Santa'. For this method you can have the kids draw names for the person they will buy a gift for. However no one can tell each other who they are buying for. To make it more interesting have each child open their gift and try to guess who it came from. They may be able to guess it by being aware of their classmate's particular interest or skills, especially if the gift is homemade.

If the child that opened the gift doesn't correctly identify their 'mystery Santa' you can have them do a silly little dance or some other funny activity. They then get to make another guess, but every time they miss they have to repeat the dance or other activity until they guess who the gift came from.

Game Board Christmas Games

Children always enjoy board games so how about letting them create their own! Do to this have everyone make a piece for an 'unknown' game board'. You set guidelines for the pieces such as size of about 2" and must be Christmas related.

The game board can be a large piece of cardboard or even a large rug. You can make the theme of the game just about anything you want, but it should be Christmas related in keeping with the season. This is especially true if you want to combine the board game with the gift exchange by making the game pieces be the gifts they exchange before they start playing the game.

Christmas Fun-time at the Office

We all know that being in an office can get boring, but if you're lucky enough to have an employer who doesn't mind you having a little holiday fun, then liven the office up with some Christmas time fun!

Of course the most common thing to do is, to have an office Christmas Party. But how about having more than one party during the holiday season, does that sound like even more fun? :)

Cookie Exchange Party

One favorite would be to have a 'cookie exchange party'. This party could be held during lunchtime on the scheduled day. Have everyone bring several dozen homemade cookies. Be sure to set a specific number of cookies for everyone to make. Once all the cookie plates are set out, give everyone an empty plate and let them choose the cookies they want and put them on their plate.

Tree Trimming at the Office

If possible maybe you could have a Christmas Tree Trimming gathering! You could have everyone bring 5-6 decorations and everyone gets to hang their ornaments on the tree. It not only brightens up the office but it makes for a fun time for everyone and helps to put them in the Christmas spirit.

With Christmas being the time of year that signifies giving, how about arranging a group activity that would help others? The place where I once worked used to have a tree with tags attached and each tag would have a gift request from someone less fortunate. You would choose a tag and that would be the gift that you would purchase for some needy person. You would then bring the gift to work and the person in charge of the project would take the gifts to be

delivered. Often these gifts would be going to a homeless shelter or perhaps an orphanage where lots of little children needed presents.

Santa's Helper Gift Exchange

How about a slightly different version of 'secret santa'? This one is called 'Santa's helper'. For this one someone within the workplace group will start the exchange by secretly providing a gift for someone with a card attached that says something like 'Santa's little helper stopped by to wish you a Merry Christmas'. Then that person will do the same thing for someone else until everyone in the office has secretly received a gift. These don't have to be expensive gifts and can be homemade as well.

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